

## Update from the Department of Early Learning July 2010

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### DIRECTOR'S NOTE

**July 1, 2010:** It's a date we have long been anticipating at DEL, for several reasons:

- The Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program officially comes to DEL from the Department of Social and Health Services (where it was called the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program, or ITEIP). We are very excited to have them join our team!
- We have issued the draft three-year action plan, which is the first step for implementing strategies in our state's Early Learning Plan.
- We launch a new phase of Seeds to Success, our state's quality rating and improvement system that we and our partner Thrive by Five Washington are testing in five communities around the state.
- DEL has launched the first "release" of our new tool for tracking training and professional development information for early learning professionals. It's called the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT), and we are very excited about how this tool will help us manage professional development data now and in the future.



You can read more about all of these important early learning milestones in this newsletter. I want to acknowledge the hard work of DEL staff and our many partners around the state in realizing all of these accomplishments. It is truly exciting to see the energy and resources our state has invested in our youngest learners continue to yield results that will support success in school and life.

—*Bette Hyde, Director*

### DEL closed, staff temporarily laid off July 12

DEL will be closed on Monday, July 12. This is the first of several unpaid days for DEL staff and staff in many other state agencies in the coming state fiscal year. It is due to state budget cuts and is mandated in Senate Bill 6503. For more information, visit the Office of Financial Management website at:

[www.ofm.wa.gov/layoff/default.asp](http://www.ofm.wa.gov/layoff/default.asp)

On this day and future temporary layoff days, DEL child care licensing supervisors will be available for child care emergencies only. Licensed child care providers can contact the licensing supervisor in their local DEL office *only for emergencies*. Find a list of DEL offices here:

[www.del.wa.gov/about/contact.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/about/contact.aspx)

If you need to report suspected child abuse or neglect, please call 1.866.END.HARM (1.866.363.4276). DEL will reopen on Tuesday, July 13.

### ESIT joins DEL!

DEL is proud to welcome the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program to our agency. We are committed to ensuring this is a smooth transition for ESIT staff and for children and families who receive early intervention services through this program.

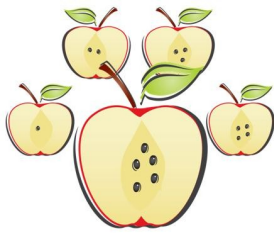
Please visit [www.del.wa.gov/esit](http://www.del.wa.gov/esit) to learn more about this program for children birth to 3.

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## Second year of Seeds to Success field test begins

*State quality rating and improvement system tested in 5 communities*

DEL and Thrive by Five Washington have begun the second year of Seeds to Success, our state's quality rating and improvement system. The quality standards being measured in Seeds have been modified based on what we learned in the first year of the field test.

Visit [www.del.wa.gov/seeds](http://www.del.wa.gov/seeds) to see the updated Seeds quality standards and to learn more about the second year of the field test.

## DEL launches new training, professional development tracking tool

DEL's Managed Education Registry and Information Tool (MERIT) is now live for trainers and training organizations currently approved to offer trainings to early learning professionals!

MERIT replaces the State Training and Registry System (STARS) database that DEL took offline in April while we worked to build a more robust tool. In this first-phase launch of MERIT, STARS-approved trainers and training organizations can log in to add information about available trainings. DEL hosted a webinar for trainers and training organizations on June 30 to introduce them to MERIT.

If you are a current STARS-approved trainer or training organization, you can log on to MERIT now at <http://merit.del.wa.gov>. A MERIT user manual and other information is available there. If you need help with your login and password, please e-mail [merit@del.wa.gov](mailto:merit@del.wa.gov).

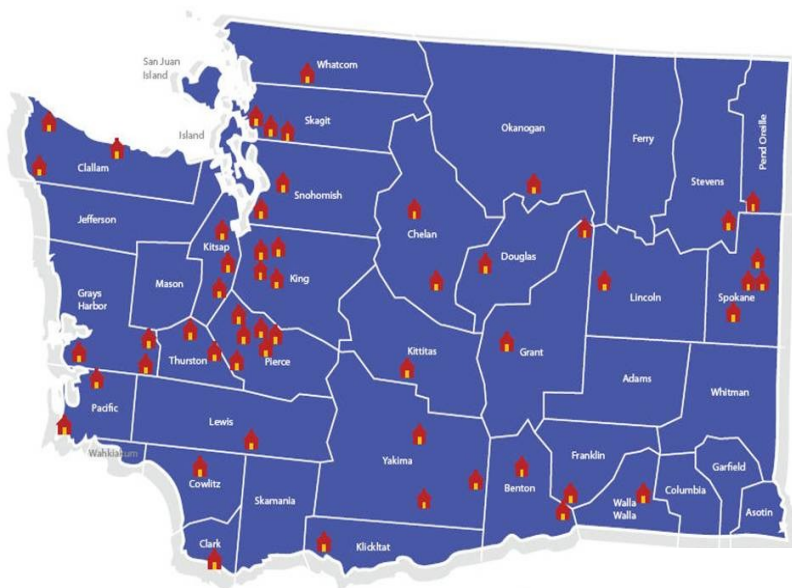
Early learning professionals, including child care providers, will get MERIT access in the near future so they can enter information about their training history, and search available trainings. Stay tuned!

Licensed child care providers must continue to meet all STARS training requirements. The STARS rules do not change—MERIT is simply a new tool to help manage information about training. For STARS information, please visit [www.del.wa.gov/stars](http://www.del.wa.gov/stars).

The screenshot shows the MERIT website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Help, Feedback, and Sign in. Below this is a header section with the MERIT logo and the text "Managed Education and Registry Information Tool". There are buttons for Home and Search MERIT. The main content area includes a welcome message: "Welcome to the Managed Education Registry Information Tool (MERIT)". Below this, a brief description states: "MERIT is the Department of Early Learning's (DEL) online training database for early learning professionals. This system helps track basic and ongoing training for early learning professionals to help support high-quality early learning settings for children." There is a section titled "I need to:" with three links: "Find a training", "Find a trainer", and "Find a training organization". On the right side, there is a "Sign in" section with fields for Username and Password, a Sign in button, and a link for "Forgot your Password?". The Washington State Department of Early Learning logo is visible in the top right corner.

## DEL, OSPI announce WaKIDS pilot participants

The 120 classrooms that will be part of the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) pilot have been chosen! Classrooms in 54 school districts around the state will be part of this pilot. The pilot will take place during school year 2010-2011, and participants will help DEL and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, in collaboration with Thrive by Five Washington, test a kindergarten readiness assessment process.



The pilot includes three parts:

- Family connection
- Early learning provider collaboration
- An inventory of child's social/emotional, physical, cognitive and linguistic development

**WaKIDS**  
Washington Kindergarten Inventory  
of Developing Skills

Visit [www.del.wa.gov/wakids](http://www.del.wa.gov/wakids) to see a list of participating sites and to learn more about this pilot.

## Resource booklet available for families affected by incarceration

DEL has copies of the Department of Social and Health Services publication, *"Beyond the Walls: A Guide to Services for Families Affected by Incarceration."* If your family is affected by incarceration or you work with families who are, please e-mail [communications@del.wa.gov](mailto:communications@del.wa.gov) to request free copies to be sent to you.

More information about services for families affected by incarceration is available on the Department of Corrections website at [www.doc.wa.gov/family/](http://www.doc.wa.gov/family/)



## Action plan for draft Early Learning Plan issued

### *Three-year action plan lays out implementation plan for three lead groups*

Now that we are nearing adoption of the statewide Early Learning Plan, leaders from DEL, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive by Five Washington have developed a three-year action plan for how to begin implementing the plan. The three-year action plan represents how the three organizations will proceed in implementing important strategies in the Early Learning Plan.

The draft Early Learning Plan includes many important strategies, some of which can and will be implemented immediately. Others will require more planning time or funding.

The three-year action plan prioritizes strategies that DEL, OSPI and Thrive will help implement in the coming three years. Those decisions were made using the following guiding questions:

- Is the strategy/action grounded in science and is it measurable?
- Does it address the preparation gap?
- Is there financing or is it a legislative priority for early learning?
- Is it grounded in the ELP vision and guiding principles?

Public input on the draft Early Learning Plan closed on June 18. That input is currently being considered. The Early Learning Plan will be presented to the Early Learning Advisory Council this fall for adoption.

Learn more and read the three-year action plan at [www.del.wa.gov/plan](http://www.del.wa.gov/plan).



### Upcoming early learning events...

#### Starting Strong Institutes

- August 5 and 6, Yakima Convention Center—[www.esd105.wednet.edu](http://www.esd105.wednet.edu)
- August 9 and 10, Marriott Hotel in SeaTac—[www.psesd.org](http://www.psesd.org)

#### August 14— Early Learning Community Fair

<http://earlylearning.org/events/2010-community-fair>

### Second 'reboot' survey now available

Licensed child care providers can now take the second in DEL's series of monthly "licensing reboot" surveys online at [www.del.wa.gov/reboot](http://www.del.wa.gov/reboot).

This month, we want to hear from licensed providers about relationships between DEL staff and providers: What's working well, and what can we do better?

Feedback from the first reboot survey, about how DEL communicates with licensed providers, will be shared on [www.del.wa.gov/reboot](http://www.del.wa.gov/reboot) in the coming weeks.

The licensing reboot is a simple way for DEL to get input from licensed providers on several issues related to licensing. Also during the reboot, we are looking at what tools and resources our staff need to work effectively with child care providers to support safe and health child care.

All licensed providers should have gotten a letter from DEL in early June about this project. If you need a hard copy of the survey, please contact your local DEL office.